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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Syria/Lebanon, Palestinian  
Territories, Iraq, Iran (5/8)

11. Summary: Syrian papers reported the visit to Damascus by Nabih Berri, Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, and his separate meetings with President Asad and Vice President Faruq al-Shar'a. Berri briefed Asad and Shara on the results of the Lebanese national dialogue and status of relations between Syria and Lebanon.

Papers also reported that Juergen Cain Kuelbel, German researcher and criminologist and author of "Hariri's Assassination: Hidden Evidence," delivered a lecture at Al-Asad National Library Sunday evening. During the lecture, Kuelbel touched upon evidence and details he documents in his book, saying, "I discovered part of the international conspiracy behind the crime that claimed the life of Lebanese ex-premier Rafik al-Hariri," the criminologist said. He pointed out that the crime preceded a plot to destroy the historic ties connecting Syria and Lebanon. "Syria is innocent and has nothing to do with that crime or the other assassinations," the German writer underlined, indicating that assassinations in Lebanon have their roots in the Lebanese civil war and the Israeli occupation and its crimes in the country. "Israeli intelligence stands behind this crime," the criminologist noted, clarifying that the jamming equipment used by the former Lebanese premier's convoy was out of order an hour before the assassination. "No one can do that but the central network that controls the electronic system of the equipment" he added, suggesting that Israel is the only party that has such capabilities. The lecture was attended by the Ministers of Expatriates, Labor and Social Affairs, and Culture, along with a number of Arab and Foreign ambassadors to Syria.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"President Asad holds discussion with Nabih Berri, Speaker of Lebanese Parliament, who briefs the President on the results of the Lebanese National dialogue. Talks tackle distinguished relations between the two countries" (Government-owned Tishreen, 5/8)

"Juergen Cain Kuelbel, German Researcher and Criminologist, author of 'Hariri's Assassination, Hidden Evidence,' exposes

details and documented proofs: Syria is innocent of Al-Hariri assassination" (Government-owned Tishreen, 5/8)

"Information Minister Bilal confers with Ali Al-Qahtani, Saudi Ambassador to Damascus. Al-Qahtani: Syria is a strategic extension for the Kingdom; Targeting Syria is a red line" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 5/8)

"Lebanese circles warn against attempts to pave the way for Israeli intervention in Lebanon. Aoun: The government must resign. Wakim: The March 14 forces endeavor to fabricate crises" (Government-owned Tishreen, 5/8)

"Palestinian Prime Minister Hanieh: Solving the financial crisis is the responsibility of the whole international community" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 5/8)

"A Palestinian martyred in Lahia. The Quartet is to meet tomorrow. HAMAS denies rumors about plans to assassinate Palestinian President Abbas: Our arms are directed against occupation. The European positions towards us are not uniform" (Government-owned Tishreen, 5/8)

"A US soldier killed in Al-Anbar in Iraq. An agreement is reached on a plan to sustain Arab communications with Iraq" (Government-owned Tishreen, 5/8)

### 13. Editorial Block Quotes:

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"Distribution of Roles"  
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Ahmad Dawwa, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (5/8) "Samir Ja'ja, leader of the Lebanese Forces party, called for keeping Lebanon away from the Arab-Israeli conflict.... People like Ja'ja and Walid Jumblatt want to isolate Lebanon from its Arab environment in favor of Israel's control and hegemony....

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"We wonder how such calls could be made when Israel is still occupying Lebanese territories and detaining dozens of Lebanese....

"Such calls have two objectives: Taking Lebanon back to the Israeli camp and igniting civil war. Differences over these issues within the Lebanese society are enormous and no accord over them can be reached....

"Coming days will reveal further details and connections. But there are Lebanese forces that are alert to what is being concocted against Lebanon in American and Israeli circles. They will not allow Lebanon to turn into an Israeli pawn or to sign a new 17 May agreement."

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"Who Compensates the Victims?"  
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Izz-al-Din al-Darwish, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (5/8): "The United States blesses Israel's deadly starvation siege on Palestinians and uses its influence, as the world's superpower, to tighten this siege and prevent any country from breaking it, even through the transfer of humanitarian financial donations for the Palestinian people....

"We wonder if any earthly or divine law allows such a siege...? How can anyone in his right mind believe the Bush administration when it says that it cares about human rights, democracy, security, and peace...?"

"The US Administration has created a deep gulf between the United States and the rest of the world, particularly Arabs and Muslims, and pushed the world to hate the United States....

"Americans have realized why the world is moving away from them. They are preparing to call their administration to account, either directly or through the next elections. But the question remains: Who will compensate the victims of this administration from among Palestinians, Iraqis, Afghanis, Iranians, and others on the long list...?"

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"An International Consortium Is the Solution"

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Ali Nasrallah, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, commented (5/8): "Iran's proposal to enrich uranium under the supervision of an international consortium is an adequate way out of the crisis of the Iranian nuclear program.

"The Iranian proposal provides a golden opportunity that the international powers that sincerely seek a peaceful solution should seize, to embarrass the United States and put an end to its excuses.

"The Iranian proposal entails much flexibility and reflects Iran's eagerness to find a solution to the crisis....

"Tehran's acceptance of a consortium to supervise uranium enrichment is a strong message in all directions. It strengthens the positions of China and Russia, which reject the principle of sanctions or the use of force. It backs the United States, France, Britain, and Germany into a corner. It also reduces

Washington's ability to apply pressure on Beijing and Moscow...."

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